



Supporting Working Families and Ensuring the Health and Safety of Children During the Current Economic Crisis

The current national and local economic crisis has increased the number of families facing tremendous challenges in providing for the well-being of their young children. FTF proposes to take immediate action to address this economic crisis. This proposal contains the following components:

- support the immediate and urgent needs of young children
- preserve the long-term approach to improving the early childhood development and health system throughout the state and in local communities
- ensure local decision making
- use both discretionary and regional funding allocations

Recommendations:

FTF analyzed the impacts of the economic crisis, state budget cuts, federal stimulus bill and FTF regional funding plans in the areas of child care, professional development, health and family support to determine possible effects on children and families. The analysis resulted in the following recommendations:

1. Utilize \$65 million of regional funding from discretionary and formula allocations of FTF funding to implement strategies that can provide immediate supports for children and families.
2. Allow Regional Councils to reexamine the strategic directions of access and affordability and family support in their approved funding plans without additional Board approval. Within certain guidelines determined by FTF staff, strategies may be modified or funding targeted toward the three focus areas identified in this discussion.
3. Allow Regional Councils to redirect funding plan amounts approved for needs and assets, evaluation, communications and carry forward into strategies that address the three focus areas identified in this discussion without additional Board approval.
4. Request a bid waiver from ADOA that allows Regional Councils to expedite the award process to more quickly provide programs and services for children and families in the three focus areas:
 - a. Stabilize working families - \$23.3 million of discretionary funding used to provide scholarships to working families with children 0-5 and incomes at 200% or below FPL.
 - 4-month strategy through end of FY 2009 until federal stimulus and FY 2010 budget addresses need
 - \$600/month provides basic licensed child care for one child
 - \$23.3 million provides 4-month scholarship for 9,708 children
 - Additional \$6.4 million in Regional Council access and affordability strategies could be used to support this goal if redirected by Regional Council
 - b. Prevent hunger in young children - \$500,000 of discretionary funding used to provide emergency food boxes for families with children 0-5.
 - Demand for emergency food boxes in Arizona has increased 40% in past year
 - \$500,000 provides 2 additional \$22 food boxes for 11,350 families for 4-month period through end of FY 2009 until receipt of federal stimulus
 - c. Support families to prevent abuse and neglect - \$26 million of regional funding is already approved to provide family support programs and services.
 - Existing strategies within family support may be redirected within certain guidelines
 - Strategies would be implemented through end of FY 2010
5. Continue to analyze the economic data related to health programs and services to identify for the Board additional health-related goals that provide immediate supports for children and families. FTF will continue to develop and expand our partnership with the healthcare system so that children are receiving the preventative healthcare they deserve to ensure appropriate development and early identification of any health concerns.